

MAJOR FACILITY CHANGES SUPPORT GROWTH

ABOUT FINISH LINE INDUSTRIES. Finish Line Industries is comprised of two market segments: painting of home construction materials for the real estate market, and high-end custom painting of various equipment for the sports industry. Based in Newberg, Oregon, Finish Line has experienced tremendous growth over the years and now supports over 30 full-time employees.

THE CHALLENGE. Finish Line has a base of loyal customers with a wide variety of product needs. Products coming through the facility require significant floor support to ensure custom products get out on time. The facility layout was starting to show its age, including excess material handling and long lines clogging shop floors. Partially painted products were often parked behind newer released shop orders, and employees searched for misplaced work-in-process (WIP) inventories. Heavy parts accumulated, bottlenecking operations and requiring an army of personnel just to keep product moving through the shop. Business owner Christ Thom states: "I was working long hours, between customer developments and actually directing shop floor activities. I knew that if we were to continue to grow we needed to stop, take a look at our total operation methodology and make some major changes."

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. The company reached out to the Oregon Manufacturing Extension Partnership (OMEP), part of the MEP National Network, for assistance. OMEP conducted an assessment of potential improvements that the Finish Line team could make to their operations to improve their manufacturing capabilities. After a full day of comprehensive assessment work, OMEP suggested a multi-point plan that would move their manufacturing needle. "I have to admit I was a bit skeptical at first," states Thom. "It looked like a lot of work on everyone's part and we were already working way too many hours. But I knew we needed to make some changes because we could not continue our growth plans by doing more of the same thing. It was a leap of faith but I committed to 18 months of OMEP help."

Eighteen months later, Finish Line Industries has four specific workflow patterns going through the shop, with each workflow geared toward its particular product segments. The team has installed several new paint booths, retrofitted a previously unused paint curing oven, installed bays of energy-saving LED lighting, and rearranged about 60 percent of the shop floor equipment. While implementing these physical improvements, the company also scrapped its old QuickBooks ERP system and migrated to a much more powerful online enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. The improvements increased both capacity and revenue, enabling Finish Line to retain jobs and freeing up Thom to work on business development.

"Our business is growing, I actually have time to work on new business development! I'm working a lot fewer hours and best of all, we're more profitable today. I also now enjoy working with customers more closely to create bigger and more advanced solutions with some of my biggest customers."

-Chris Thom, Owner

RESULTS



Retained **30** jobs



Increased capacity by **40%**



Increased revenue/sales by **23%**



Implemented new ERP system

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